



2012

Glimpses of Ecstasy: The Public Shaping of Personal History in Carlos Bulosan's *America is in the Heart*

Nicholas A. Henson
University of Oregon

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13023/disclosure.21.02>

Follow this and additional works at: <https://uknowledge.uky.edu/disclosure>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License](#).



Recommended Citation

Henson, Nicholas A. (2012) "Glimpses of Ecstasy: The Public Shaping of Personal History in Carlos Bulosan's *America is in the Heart*," *disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory*: Vol. 21 , Article 2.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13023/disclosure.21.02>

Available at: <https://uknowledge.uky.edu/disclosure/vol21/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by *disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory*. Questions about the journal can be sent to disclosurejournal@gmail.com

Glimpses of Ecstasy

The Public Shaping of Personal History in Carlos Bulosan's America is in the Heart

- Nicholas A Henson

One of the most intriguing aspects of the radical Filipino writer Carlos Bulosan's *America is in the Heart: A Personal History* (1946) is Bulosan's use of an autobiographic persona as a means for conveying his life. Bulosan shares the name Carlos with this autobiographic persona, but through the course of the book he is more intimately known as Allos among his family. This distinction in names and personal identities is a crucial component in the unique ways Bulosan constructs Allos's personality. Allos's life describes a specific set of events but also strives to encapsulate the Filipino immigrant experience in the United States prior to World War II. Through Allos, Bulosan struggles to describe the Filipino community and its experience in a country hostile to their presence with some sense of unity. By recounting his experiences, Allos depicts Filipinos as both empowered individuals striving to achieve the American dream and perpetrators of violence and vice. Near the middle of the text Allos describes one of his reasons for writing his life story: "it was not easy to understand why the Filipinos were brutal yet tender, nor was it easy to believe that they had been made this way by the reality of America."ⁱ For Allos the goal in writing is to gain the knowledge to "synthesize the heart-breaking tragedies" he witnesses and "interpret them objectively."ⁱⁱ The movement towards objectivity is not a simple one since, as Allos declares, "There were times when I found myself inextricably involved, not because I was drawn to this life by its swiftness and violence, but because I was a part and a product of the world in which it was born."ⁱⁱⁱ The swift and violent life by which Allos defines himself serves as the primary challenge he faces in the text. As he tells his story he must communicate and repudiate the root causes of that life. Allos goes on to say, "I was swept by its tragic whirlpool, violently and inevitably; and it was only when I had become immune to the violence and pain that I was able to integrate my experiences so that I could really find out what had happened to me in those tragic years."^{iv} On the level of autobiography, the persona of Allos provides Bulosan this ability to integrate Bulosan's personal experiences along with the experiences of the Filipino community in America as a whole.

Bulosan's own life was not typical of all Filipino experience, however it did leave him uniquely suited to synthesize Filipino immigrant experience and convey that experience to a larger literary audience. Bulosan was born on November 2nd, 1911 in Mangusmana, Binalonan, in the central Philippines.^v Due to the poverty of his family, Bulosan and two of his brothers eventually immigrated to America. The seventeen-year-old Bulosan arrived in Seattle on July 22, 1930.^{vi} His arrival came at the height of the Great Depression when Filipino immigrants primarily found work through seasonal farm labor and in the service industry.^{vii} Bulosan was little prepared for life in the United States. As Carey McWilliams notes in his introduction to *America is in the Heart*, "he had completed only three years of schooling and spoke little if any English."^{viii} While Bulosan would go on to work for a short time, his poor health kept him from heavy labor. Instead, Bulosan's brothers supported him while he educated himself at the Los Angeles Public Library. Bulosan also went on to work as a union activist and journalist seeking to improve the lives of Filipinos in America.^{ix} It was Bulosan's work as a radical organizer that best prepared him for his task in *America is in the Heart*. Besides the early experience it gave him writing for publications like *The New Tide* in 1934, it allowed him to meet and interact with other writers.^x Eventually Bulosan's struggles

with tuberculosis and kidney problems confined him for an extended period in the Los Angeles General Hospital.^{xi} It was here that Bulosan completed his literary and political education by reading a book a day.^{xii} Bulosan would go on to have success as a writer of poetry, fiction, and essays, but as World War II ended and the Cold War began the issue of his socialist politics plagued him. Despite his serious health problems Bulosan lived until September 11, 1956 when he died in Seattle from advanced broncho-pneumonia after drinking and wandering the streets all night.^{xiii} As E. San Juan Jr. puts it, "he was a victim less of neurosis or despair than of cumulative suffering from years of privation and persecution."^{xiv}

Despite his hardships, Bulosan's life did lend itself towards the goals he puts forward through Allos in *America is in the Heart*. Bulosan was able to gain an education and experience writing which let him integrate his experiences and the experiences of his fellow Filipinos. Carey McWilliams notes this synthesis in his introduction to *America is in the Heart* by arguing that "one may doubt that Bulosan personally experienced each and every one of the manifold brutalities and indecencies so vividly described in this book, but it can fairly be said . . . that some Filipino was indeed the victim of each of these or similar incidents."^{xv} This leads McWilliams to label *America is in the Heart* a "social classic," which immediately points to the text's alternating purposes of personal and communal identification and historical recording.^{xvi} As such, Bulosan's creative additions to Allos's life can continue to represent Bulosan's personal history insofar as he remains affected by these events even if they did not happen to him personally.

Nevertheless, Allos's claim to objectivity in relating a life riddled with vice and violence highlights the primary difficulty behind relating a personal history. Bulosan's attempt to encapsulate Filipino immigrant experience and his use of an autobiographical persona raises a question not of accuracy or verisimilitude in regards to Bulosan's life, but of the distinct role public discourses can have in shaping a personal history. Through the course of the autobiographical novel Bulosan alternates between depicting his personal experiences and confronting the larger issues facing the Filipino immigrant community. Foremost among these issues in *America is in the Heart* are the stereotypes of Filipinos as violent, depraved, and sex crazed that dominated discourses about that community prior to World War II in the United States. Bulosan's personal history seeks not only to subvert the vitriolic racism that fueled such stereotypes, but also to confront the social conditions facing Filipino immigrants in the United States that reinforced these essentializing stereotypes. As such, Bulosan does not shy away from writing about crime, prostitution, poverty, and violence in the lives of Filipinos. However, Bulosan focuses on these features of Filipino life as effects of the limitations placed on the Filipino community by the hostility of the general American public. Each episode in Allos's life then becomes a means for Bulosan to contrast his internal desires against the external influences that restrict those desires. While these contrasts can be read as moments that undermine the facts of Bulosan's life with fiction, they operate instead more as moments of schism where Bulosan's pressing concerns about public discourse are disrupted by private desires. By tracing these schisms, we can come to read *America is in the Heart* as a model for how to still read a text that purposefully conflates public discourses with personal history as autobiographical.

Nowhere is this dichotomy of internal desire versus external restrictions more prevalent in the text than in Bulosan's depictions of his relationships with women. The women Allos encounters in the text often fall into two categories: the nurturing mother or the immoral woman. Added to this division is Bulosan's nuanced approach to sexualized situations throughout the text. In each instance Bulosan presents his discourse about sex in a carefully crafted manner that places Allos as an innocent observer or victim who is

surrounded by immorality. By protecting Allos's sexual innocence Bulosan directly attacks one of the most common stereotypes of Filipino sexuality. In Mae M. Ngai's words, it was commonly believed that Filipinos "fancied white women."^{xvii} Sexual depravity was considered systemic and "the notion that Filipino men were oversexed was commonplace."^{xviii} The breadth of these stereotypes is particularly stunning. In her discussion of stereotypical sexualized depictions of Filipinos Ngai makes particular note that even Carey McWilliams, the socially progressive journalist who provides the introduction to *America is in the Heart*, is susceptible to these stereotypes. Ngai comments that "even the liberal Carey McWilliams was susceptible to the influence of racial stereotyping. In his pluralist tract *Brothers under the Skin*, McWilliams wrote that Filipinos' "sexual experiences are, indeed, fantastic."^{xix} Bulosan's depiction of sexual issues reverses the rhetoric of fantastic sexuality and its extreme version, sexual depravity, away from Filipino men and projects it on whites and white women in particular. At the same time Bulosan seems to castigate women for sexual depravity, he turns to personal relationships with white women to describe an idealized image of America that is both welcoming and nurturing to himself personally and to Filipino immigrants in general.

When approaching the text as autobiography, Bulosan's own relationship with America and his sexual identity become increasingly opaque. Bulosan's critique of reigning discourses about Filipino sexuality cannot be separated from his own attitudes about sexuality and his portrayal of women in *America is in the Heart*. In his critiques of white representations of Filipino sexuality Bulosan presents a troubling depiction of misogynistic violence towards women while at the same time depicting women as representing the redemptive side of America. The multifaceted nature of women is an example of a schism in the text's portrayal of a unified persona whereby we can examine the dueling pressures of relating a personal history and projecting a public face for Filipinos. Allos then becomes an amalgamation of Bulosan's personal experiences and an idealized representation of Filipino immigrants in the United States that is impossible to dissect. Instead, Bulosan's personal history presents readers with an oscillating image as nuanced and as troubling as his depictions of American culture and its efforts to ostracize Filipino immigrants. As such, the most productive way to read the self proclaimed personal history of *America is in the Heart* is to trace these oscillations between Bulosan's public projections and private omissions.

While Bulosan's work has been receiving increasing critical attention since its rediscovery in the 1970s, it remains widely unread. A brief overview of the text then becomes advantageous for those unfamiliar with the text. Separated into four sections, the text begins with Allos's early life and focuses on the economic hardships of Allos's family as they attempt to survive as farmers in the rapidly changing colonial atmosphere of the American controlled Philippines. As Allos and his family slowly lose their land due to debt incurred from paying for the education of one of Allos's brothers, Allos decides to leave home at the age of thirteen to find work. At this time, Allos begins his education by learning to read and slowly earns enough money to emigrate to America. With his arrival in America, Bulosan moves the narrative towards its primary purpose of examining Filipino experience in the United States in parts II and III. In these sections, Bulosan depicts Allos as constantly wandering up and down the Western United States as a migrant farm worker. Early in his experiences, Allos is overwhelmed by the violence and racism that Filipino workers faced at the hands of the white communities where they found themselves working. Eventually Allos reunites with two of his brothers who had also immigrated and becomes acquainted with a number of radical artists and union organizers. Allos soon finds himself drawn to socialism and radical labor movements and he sees them as representing the best hope for improving the working and living conditions of Filipino immigrants. To this end, Allos begins his career writing for a radical publication advocating for Filipino rights. Part IV highlights Allos's

prolonged struggle with tuberculosis and his education through his use of the Los Angeles public library and the tutelage of two female friends he makes during his convalescence. After numerous surgeries, Allos is able to leave the hospital and return to a semblance of a normal life. No longer able to support himself, Allos becomes an economic burden on his brothers. Nevertheless, Allos finds limited solace working as a labor organizer. At the text's conclusion, Allos, his brothers, and his fellow radicals each find themselves being overwhelmed by the violence and depravity affecting the Filipino community in America. Yet they quickly discover a newfound hope with the beginning of World War II. As many of Allos's companions enlist in the Army to defend both the Philippines and the United States, Allos's faith in the American dream is reawakened.

Bulosan's effort to represent Filipino experience blurs the nature of his personal history in relation to the genre of autobiography, which ostensibly presents the author's life story in retrospect. As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson note in their work *Reading Autobiography*, writers of autobiography become both the subject and the object of investigation in autobiography. Bulosan's autobiography fits into this description in many ways through its bildungsroman structure and representation of Bulosan's education and achievement of intellectual integrity. Yet the task of representing the Filipino immigrant experience in America places an additional pressure on Bulosan's work. As Smith and Watson note, for life narrators, "personal memories are the primary archival source," but this source is necessarily "a subjective form of evidence, not externally verifiable; rather, it is asserted on the subject's authority."^{xx} Bulosan's authority as a narrator of his life depends on his ability not only to document his life, but to document the collective experience of Filipinos in America as well. Augusto Fauni Espiritu points to this pattern as proof that Bulosan presents himself, or at least the literary representation of himself, as a Christ like figure. Bulosan depicts Allos as suffering from the sins of Filipinos in America while remaining innocent himself. Allos then functions as a redemptive figure for all Filipinos since his desires for education and self-improvement represent the core Filipino characteristics that Bulosan suggests would supercede their destructive lifestyles if given the chance. While there are far reaching symbolic ramifications to such a characterization, the general structure of one person standing in for an entire people is a compelling one in regards to *America is in the Heart*.

The relative success or failure of Bulosan's attempt to encapsulate the Filipino experience in pre-World War II America has been the focus for much of the criticism surrounding the book. In particular, *America is in the Heart*'s strong focus on the plight of the Filipino worker places an explicit emphasis on Filipino laborers in America. This allows critics such as San Juan Jr. to claim that the Filipino peasant-worker is the hero of the text. In order to depict this story San Juan Jr. notes, "it is necessary to employ a mediating device, a consciousness that will bring the various interesting possibilities together in some discernable pattern of meaning or purpose."^{xxi} San Juan Jr.'s interpretation establishes Bulosan's personal history as merely a vehicle for the much larger story of the Filipino people in America. Martin Joseph Ponce, on the other hand, describes the text as only a semi-autobiography and the criticism around it as focusing on it as an immigration narrative. Ponce provides a succinct description of the criticism surrounding *America is in the Heart* since its rediscovery in the 1970s: "consonant with the [Asian American] movement's emphasis on claiming (or disclaiming) America, subsequent interpretations often examined the book's attitude toward the U.S., valuing the narrative's insistent critique of labor exploitation and racism, while questioning its seeming 'affirmation' of America in the concluding pages."^{xxii} Further criticism since the text's rediscovery in the 1970s has "stressed a transnational, postcolonial (or anticolonial) approach to U.S. Filipino literature more generally."^{xxiii}

Yet within these interpretations there remains the question as to what the subtitle of "personal history" might mean to *America is in the Heart* and how we might interpret Bulosan as a writer of autobiography attempting to relate his own history and identity. More importantly, these interpretations also fail to account for the ubiquitous nature of sex in the text and the moral interpretations Bulosan places on the text's sexual episodes through Allos's reaction and narration. Integral to an understanding of Bulosan's work as an autobiography is an expanded definition of autobiography based on the use of self-narration to interpret and influence American society. Part of this interpretation of autobiography is based on Benedict Anderson's theories of the nation and nationalism as being an "imagined political community."^{xxiv} Anderson's work moves away from describing nationalism in terms of genuineness and examines it through the way nations are imagined by communities. Anderson also posits the importance of community in the question of nationalism. As Anderson puts it, "it is imagined as a *community*, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings."^{xxv} This imagined fraternity cannot be discounted in relation to Bulosan's efforts to portray Filipino fraternity in the text and to integrate Filipinos into American culture. It is equally important to note that this purpose serves as the text's final point with the beginning of World War II. Bulosan concludes the text by focusing on World War II, one of the largest influences on the integration of Filipinos into American society. Bulosan describes it as "a signal of triumph," but one that "took a war and a great calamity in our country to bring us together."^{xxvi} The tragedy of war brings about unity through necessity that allows Filipinos to serve in the armed forces of the United States as well as bringing about a sense of unified purpose to the disparate elements of the Filipino community.

Bulosan's use of autobiography to explore these issues of community are particularly relevant since, as Steven Hunsaker posits, autobiography can operate as a means to change national character through a challenge to imagined communities. According to Hunsaker, autobiographies that posit such challenges "imagine new versions of the community for themselves within otherwise restrictive national situations" through the process of "speaking against previous models of national identity to establish new, more liberating, or more convenient models of nationality."^{xxvii} Hunsaker also posits that authors engaging in this method of reshaping ideas of nationality "*portray* themselves selecting, rejecting, shaping, and reimagining the nation to suit their own political and ideological goals."^{xxviii} In this sense, the communal and the personal narratives in the text share a common goal of portraying an idealized concept of community as decided upon by an idealized portrayal of self. Thus Bulosan's idealization of himself through Allos can project an idealized America that will eventually accept his hope to "become a part of her great tradition."^{xxix} Allos can regain his confidence in the American dream, despite all that he has suffered and conclude his personal history with the declaration "I knew that no man could destroy my faith in America that had sprung from all our hopes and aspirations, *ever*."^{xxx} *America is in the Heart* then represents a critique of the dominant American culture and its mistreatment of Filipino immigrants while also implicitly rejecting those same critiques in favor of projecting the idealized America springing from Bulosan's hopes and aspirations.

It is under this structure of critiquing and idealizing America that Bulosan approaches the issue of Filipino sexuality. Bulosan counters the representation of Filipinos as "sex-crazy" or "sex-starved" by depicting the Filipino struggle in the United States as a fundamentally American struggle for improvement.^{xxxi} Bulosan presents Allos as struggling

against racist stereotypes about Filipinos while still portraying their genesis in the decadent lifestyles Filipinos led in America. Yet Allos rejects these lifestyles as an identifying marker for Filipinos by exploring the limitations America placed on the immigrant population. As Allos puts it, "I knew that our decadence was imposed by a society alien to our character and inclination, alien to our heritage and history."^{xxxii} Allos's narration furthers this theme through his many descriptions of his travels in America as an attempt to escape an unknown terror. Allos's movement from place to place in America is continually punctuated with depictions of Filipinos engaged in some sort of vice. Allos's prayer upon reuniting with his brother, Amado, is typical of Allos's reaction to these conditions. Seeing that Amado had turned to a life of crime, Allos begs, "Please, God, don't change me in America!"^{xxxiii} In observing these vices Allos struggles to remain innocent and true to his goals of self-improvement and improving the lot of the Filipino population, but this struggle serves as his defining characteristic.

Allos's desire not to be changed by America serves to establish Bulosan's counter-argument to racist perceptions of Filipinos. Bulosan projects an idealized new model for America by depicting Filipino struggles for freedom from racism and exploitative labor practices in the United States. Integral to this is Allos's work in the labor movement. Bulosan sums up his own efforts at establishing this freedom through literature when Allos's brother, Marcario, declares the desire to build a new America through the Filipino union movement. As Marcario puts it, "we must advocate democratic ideas, and fight all forces that would abort our culture."^{xxxiv} According to Marcario, "this is the greatest responsibility of literature: to find in our struggle that which has a future."^{xxxv} Bulosan's own work in relating these words then takes up the task of building a new world. This task becomes more apparent as Marcario continues his speech:

We must live in America where there is freedom for all regardless of color, station and beliefs. Great Americans worked with unselfish devotion toward one goal, that is, to use the power of the myriad peoples in the service of America's freedom. They made it their guiding principle. In this we are the same; we must also fight for an America where a man should be given unconditional opportunities to cultivate his potentialities and to restore him to his rightful dignity . . . America is also the nameless foreigner, the homeless refugee, the hungry boy begging for a job and the black body dangling on a tree. America is the illiterate immigrant who is ashamed that the world of books and intellectual opportunities is closed to him. We are all that nameless foreigner, that homeless refugee, that hungry boy, that illiterate immigrant and that lynched black body. All of us, from the first Adams to the last Filipino, native born or alien, educated or illiterate – *We are America!*^{xxxvi}

With Marcario's declaration of an all-encompassing community of Americans, Bulosan establishes the new and more liberating model of nationality in the text. This model ties American ideals of freedom with the depiction of Filipino struggles in the United States. In short, Marcario's speech makes Filipinos and other castigated members of U.S. culture the heart of America since they are the ones pursuing the American dream.

Yet Bulosan's new imagined community of America is an ambiguous one defined equally by who is still absent as by who make it up. Bulosan's depiction of this new America works primarily as a repudiation of one standard – that is the racist practices that castigate the foreigner, the refugee, and the lynched black man – but it only hints at the possibility of a more inclusive alternative. This ambiguity leads to what Meg Wesling describes as "the tension behind the contradictory impulses of the novel, as the text seems at once to criticize the exclusionary promise of the American Dream while at the same time aspiring to achieve

that myth's fulfillment."^{xxxvii} In relation to the numerous depictions of violence that whites direct at Filipinos Wesling notes, "Bulosan leaves the reader to learn from those moments that Carlos cannot fully comprehend," which in turn points readers "to the sum of his experiences as an archive of oppression and violence that stands in fundamental opposition to the ideals of America."^{xxxviii} This pattern of definition by exclusion extends to Bulosan's depiction of sexual politics in the book. As Rachel Lee points out, Bulosan's "portrait of the nation presents an abundance of absences and exclusions – that is, one does not have a confirming sign that establishes what an 'America in the heart' is."^{xxxix} Instead America is identified by what it is not, namely the numerous acts of violence and tragedy Allos faces. Bulosan is forced "to wonder at the paradox of America," which is at once filled with whites who will attack Filipinos in a labor camp and others who will offer Filipinos "refuge and tolerance."^{xl} Lee describes Bulosan's work with America as a definition-by-negation which requires "supplementary narration, for the cumulative descriptions of what an entity is not helps approximate but does not reveal what that object is."^{xli} As Lee notes, instances of violence serve as examples of what must be expunged from the text's definition of America, but other instances of intra-ethnic violence and violence against women indicate a subtext to Bulosan's primary purpose. These instances primarily surround erotic needs or passages and, according to Lee, demarcate a pattern of eroticized women as obstacles for Filipino fraternity and advancement. Lee points out that Marcario's speech about America has an inherent masculinist bias since it leaves women, and prostitutes in particular out, of its introductory clause. Bulosan does not portray these women as legitimate laborers who can partake in the types of movements and social advances that Marcario puts forward in his speech. As Lee puts it, "women are not only unrecognized as labor but appear the Other of labor – the abject identity against which male labor defines itself."^{xlii} Bulosan presents a double standard by which the men who deal with prostitutes are redeemable while the prostitutes themselves are outside redemption. Taking Lee's observations into account, women, and prostitutes in particular, are placed outside the social order and are a direct obstacle for Bulosan's reformation of Filipino identity.

The nature of Bulosan's treatment of women in the text begins to mark the uneasy representation of sex that permeates *America is in the Heart* and marks the limitations of his personal history. Throughout Bulosan's depictions of women the issue of sex is either carefully avoided or it is presented with a morality that fits in with a socially acceptable representation of sex but nevertheless ostracizes female sexuality. In her examination of the female subjects in *America is in the Heart*, Cheryl Higashida notes, "Bulosan's exclusion of female sex workers from the radicalized working-class body also speaks to his need to desexualize the Filipino working class, in response to the hypersexualization of Pinoys."^{xliii} Bulosan's depictions of Allos's antisexual relationships with white women are necessarily complicated by the dual purpose behind his personal history since it necessitates he try to counteract the common stereotypes Filipinos faced. I use the term antisexual based on Higashida's characterization of Bulosan's creation of Allos. Higashida argues that Bulosan invests "Allos with an asexual (or even antisexual persona)."^{xliiv} As I will go on to show, Allos does embrace what he describes as natural attitudes towards sex, but rejects immoral sexual views. As such, Bulosan projects a particularly focused antisexual persona rather than an asexual one through Allos. However, Allos's antisexuality does not erase the topic of sex from the text. Instead, much like Bulosan's assertion about America, sex becomes a dual discourse about what is and is not apparent in any given relationship that is overshadowed by stereotypes and preconceptions.

The dual level of discourses on sexuality Bulosan engages in is reflective of Foucault's work in *The History of Sexuality*. Bulosan works to repress Allos's sexuality, yet in doing so he creates additional discourses about sex that would normally be disqualified by

the stereotypes Bulosan is fighting against. By focusing on the sexuality of whites, Bulosan is able to disrupt the normal power relations between whites and Filipinos. As Foucault states, the issue is not "to determine whether one says yes or no to sex" but rather "to account for the fact that it is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak."^{xlvi} In regards to Bulosan's representations of sex and sexual relationships we must, as Foucault suggests, locate "the forms of power, the channels it takes, and the discourses it permeates in order to reach the most tenuous and individual modes of behavior."^{xlvi} The result for Bulosan's work is to view it as directly refuting the common images of over sexualized Filipinos in discourses about sex. Yet these discourses of sex and sexual repression are acted out on a personal level for Bulosan through his adaptation of his own relationships.

This personal connection for Bulosan's representations of sex again raises the question of how to categorize *America is in the Heart's* personal history. While so much of the text concentrates on presenting a public face for Filipinos, the text's sexual episodes indicate the collision of the private and the public. By placing Allos in sexualized situations, Bulosan is forced to confront his own sexual history and his second-class sexual status in America. Biographical accounts of Bulosan suggest that the antisexual portrayal of Allos is in fact an invention in *America is in the Heart*. In his introduction to *America is in the Heart*, Carey McWilliams quotes John Fante's description of Bulosan as being particularly interested in Caucasian women. McWilliams's account notes, "those 'Caucasian women' were always as interested in him as he undoubtedly was in them. Most were large enough to have held him in their laps with ease but they adored him as much as he adored them."^{xlvi} Additionally, according to biographer Susan Evangelista, "Carlos was deeply attracted to white women, and they to him."^{xlvi} Evangelista goes on to suggest that Bulosan had a deep connection with two women, Sanora and Dorothy Babb, who are fictionalized as Alice and Eileen Odell in *America is in the Heart*. In the text, Bulosan depicts Alice and Eileen as having platonic relationships with Allos's struggles with tuberculosis. These relationships focus on helping Allos improve himself through education. In her biography of Bulosan, Evangelista suggests that these women were not just interested in providing Bulosan with reading material. According to Evangelista, Bulosan was likely in love with Dorothy, but was "terribly sensitive to outside pressures against interracial relationships."^{xlvi} Evangelista cites a 2 May 1940 letter Bulosan writes to Dorothy. In the letter Bulosan states that "When shall we have the freedom to talk and live and admire freely? Human values are sacrificed because of the bigotry of those who would try to mother us. The night was horrible: the people were staring at us because we dared to walk down the street together. I walked home in a nightmare."^l Bulosan's awareness of this bigotry in this letter highlights his careful rewriting of this relationship into Allos's platonic relationship with Dorothy in *America is in the Heart*.

These observations about Bulosan's personal life do not invalidate Bulosan's characterization of the text as a personal history. He embellished his relationships with the women in his life in order to present a more compelling case for reworking the place of Filipinos in the imagined community of American identity. What the conflation of fact and fiction suggests is the fractures in identity that inhabit this personal history as it is caught up in the task of raising up an entire people. As such, Allos's experiences cannot be read as a direct representation of Bulosan's life, yet neither can Allos be wholly separated from Bulosan. Instead they can be directly related to an attempt by Bulosan to map discourses of sexuality and race into a nationalist dialogue that disrupts the power relations between whites and Filipinos. Bulosan's work then operates as an attempt to channel the discourses surrounding sex towards a more open and accepting attitude towards Filipinos. Each of Allos's sexual encounters forces readers to question Bulosan's presentation of sexual stereotypes. The text's emphasis on antisexual Allos's persona and the social constraints that

he is operating under serve to undermine particular racist sexual stereotypes, yet in reversing these public stereotypes Bulosan also reinforces the sense of his private sexist attitudes.

The result of this inseparability between the public and the private is that Allos refutes stereotypes about Filipino sexuality from the position of a victim. Allos's victimization comes in part from Bulosan's display of the hypocrisy that whites show in regards to morals about sex and sexuality. Yet this victimization also yields a troubling representation of women. One such example occurs after a dinner party where Allos is employed as a servant. The white dinner guests declare Filipinos to be "sex starved" and a danger to the daughters of the elite white partygoers.^{li} Early the next morning Allos carries a tray upstairs to the lady's room and finds that:

The lady of the house was still in bed. She got up and went into the bathroom when she heard me knock on the door. She came back to the room without clothes, the red hair on her body gleaming with tiny drops of water. It was the first time I had seen the onionlike whiteness of a white woman's body. I stared at her, naturally, but looked away as fast as I could when she turned in my direction. She had caught a glimpse of my ecstasy in the tall mirror, where she was nakedly admiring herself.^{lii}

Even in this scene Bulosan carefully treads the distinctions between Allos's sexuality and his innocence. Allos's gaze is described as at once natural, yet it also has a distinctly sexual result in Allos's self proclaimed ecstasy and the fact that Allos "did not forget her for a long time."^{liii} Bulosan places the issue of gratuitous sexuality on the part of the white woman. Allos's ecstasy is telling since he declares that it is the first time he has seen a white woman naked. Obviously Allos is attracted to women and to white women, yet this discourse is subverted by the need for Allos's gaze to be an innocent and desexualized one.

The dynamics of the scene are also important since Allos's reaction reverses an episode Allos relates early in the text when he was a teenager desperate for money in the Philippines. While living in the small city of Baguio, an "American lady tourist" sees Allos looking "conspicuously ugly" and asks him to "undress before her camera."^{liv} According to Allos, the tourists often took pictures of the native population, but generally avoided Christian Filipinos like Allos. Instead the tourists "seemed to take particular delight in photographing young Igorot girls with large breasts and robust mountain men whose genitals were nearly exposed, their G-strings bulging large and alive."^{lv} Between these two scenes, Bulosan reverses the source of the gaze from the colonizer to the colonized while also highlighting the hypocrisy of the lady of the house by noting her own sexuality and admiration of her naked body after the dinner party where Filipinos were derided as sex-crazed. This points again to Bulosan's efforts to empower Filipinos. Cynthia Tolentino points to Allos's experiences posing for tourists as representing a shift in perceptions in conceptions of Filipino agency. Tolentino notes that Bulosan depicts the way that Filipinos become ethnographic objects, but that the depiction also points to Bulosan's development of a subject capable of reporting and judging this process of objectification. Allos's experiences with the lady of the house serve to further develop this knowing subject. By reversing the gaze, Bulosan creates a carefully constructed image of sex and sexuality between the white elite and Filipinos. Bulosan brings to light the sexual hypocrisy inherent in white representations of Filipinos as well as highlights the power structure of white over Filipino present in his relationship with the lady of the house. No matter what he does, Allos's self-described natural gaze is always already immoral and punishable in the eyes of the white elite.

Allos's reaction to his brother's continued employment by these white elite, and the lady of the house in particular, pushes beyond the reversing of a stereotype and instead places Allos as the victim of sexual abuse. Allos becomes upset at seeing his brother "working for people who were less human and decent than he, and who believed, because they were in the position to command, that they could treat him as though he were a domestic animal..."^{lvi} In this description Bulosan directly confronts the dynamic of power inherent between the white elites and his second-class status in America. Allos is unable to even complete his thought about the injustice present in the household that his brother works for, rather ending his condemnation with an ellipsis. The unspoken thought is hinted at only a sentence later as Allos declares what he hears shouting at the edge of his mind: "I will never let them touch me with their filthy hands! I will never let them make a domestic animal out of me!"^{lvii} This declaration comes despite the fact that no one has actually touched Allos, yet it immediately calls to mind sexual abuse since it follows the highly sexualized episode with the lady of the house. Bulosan then flips the stereotype of Filipino sexuality and places the Filipino as the victim of sexual abuse at the hands of a white woman.

Shortly after the scene with Allos's declaration, he appears as a victim of sexual abuse and even rape in his one explicit sexual experience in the text. While working planting cauliflower, Allos is led to a bunkhouse for the migrant laborers where a number of farm workers have hired a Mexican prostitute. The men decide to force Allos to lose his virginity. Allos reports, "the men pinned me down on the cot upward, while Benigno hurriedly fumbled for my belt."^{lviii} As Allos is approached by the woman Allos states "the men released me, withdrawing sheepishly from the sheets. Then, as though from far away, I felt the tempestuous flow of blood in my veins."^{lix} After the prostitute and Allos finish copulating, Allos immediately runs away. Allos ends the episode with another unfinished thought as he declares "I entered my tent, trembling with a nameless shame..."^{lx} Allos is unable to fully articulate the shame that he feels from this sexual act or the troubling ramifications of his initial reaction to it. Just as with the scene with the lady of the house though, Bulosan points to the natural reaction of Allos' ecstasy. In the act of copulating Allos gives an enthusiastic description of the act that hints at the creative power of sex:

It was like spring in an unknown land. There were roses everywhere, opening to a kind sun. I heard the sudden beating of waves upon rocks, the gentle fall of rain among palm leaves. Was this eternity? Was this the source of creation? Then I heard a thunderclap – and suddenly the sound and stench of humanity permeated the air, crushing the dream. And I heard the woman saying: "There, now. It's all over."^{lxi}

Allos's reverie is broken by his ability to sense the sound and stench of humanity surrounding him. Any redemptive image of sex is lost through the context of the scene, which serves as an example of the vice surrounding Filipino lives. This operates on two levels since Allos's reaction is obviously related to the identity that Bulosan has built for him and he must reject the atmosphere and morals of the bunkhouse and the prostitute. Symbolically, it is also a reintroduction of a judging public that Bulosan himself was so sensitive of in his own life. Were Bulosan to write a sex scene that Allos wholeheartedly enjoyed, he would play into the stereotypes he is attempting to subvert. Yet when these factors are, momentarily, removed from the text the act of sex itself becomes a powerful creative force that Allos relates to eternity and creation. While neither Allos nor Bulosan linger over it, the positive nature of the act is alluded to both in Allos's reaction and the fact that the shame is distinctly left nameless. This shame could be either Allos's shame for having been forced into sex, or Bulosan's shame that any acceptance of sex must be purged from the text.

The dueling depictions of sex in the text are also indicative of Bulosan's troubling approaches to the text's female characters. For example, Bulosan's reversal of the gaze from the colonizer to the colonized during Allos's scene with the lady of the house does not detract from Bulosan's clearly sexual depiction of the lady of the house and Allos's ecstasy. There are numerous ramifications to this gaze and they hint at Bulosan's sexism. In regards to Allos's sexual encounter with the Mexican prostitute, Allos speaks of the Mexican woman only in terms of her nudity and her gaze. The description of sex is entirely one-sided and the woman's voice breaks the idealistic dream by declaring the event over and asking if Allos liked it. As Lee and Higashida have pointed out, Bulosan's depiction of women is particularly troubling, but his attitudes towards women are not an issue Bulosan completely ignores in the text. In a later episode Allos describes his feelings about women who would evoke emotions in him. Allos declares he is afraid "of such emotions because they emanated from pity," which he seeks to harden himself against.^{lxii} With some level of remorse Allos admits, "I hurled contempt at women who tried to arouse deep emotions in me."^{lxiii} Allos's admission comes after he has a drunken evening with a married woman named Teresa who begins crying after Allos's repeated attempts to touch her. Teresa is later revealed to have an unhappy married life. This revelation leads Allos to contemplate whether there is "a happy situation in the world outside of books" and to reflect on his studies.^{lxiv} Bulosan here emphasizes the creative power of literature, but in doing so he overwrites Allos's own culpability or his implicitly sexual approaches towards Teresa. While Allos may present literature as a redemptive place for happy situations, a reader of *America is in the Heart* may have a difficult time agreeing given Allos's blasé attitude toward Teresa.

Allos's pity or disdain for women is often dependent upon the social class of the women in question. Allos's reaction to the socially elite white lady of the house leaves no mistake about Bulosan's contempt for the upper class or for racist whites. In the case of the Mexican prostitute, or other prostitutes in the text, Bulosan's descriptions hint at his discomfort towards his own social position and, at times, the victimization of these women. Of particular importance to this relationship is the way that the victimized women, prostitutes or not, remind him of his sisters. This is present in two particular cases. The first occurs when Allos overhears a young woman being raped on a train going to California early during his time in America. The woman reminds Allos of his older sister Francisca and Allos notes how "innocent-looking she was, and forlorn, and I felt that there was a bond between us, a bond of fear and a common loneliness."^{lxv}

The second instance occurs when Allos directly alludes to his sisters when he meets Marian, a woman who cares for Allos after whites attack him for being a labor agitator. Marian is essentially a mother figure in the text and she works to support Allos's education before she dies from syphilis. After taking Allos in she tells him, "I'll help you. I'll work for you. You will have no obligations. What I would like is to have someone to care for, and it should be you who are young."^{lxvi} Allos notes how Marian's hands show the signs of manual labor and he states, "my heart ached, for this woman was like my little sisters in Binalonan. I turned away from her, remembering how I had walked familiar roads with my mother."^{lxvii} Marian's familial-like role is undermined by what Bulosan omits from the text. It is unclear how Marian is able to financially support Allos though prostitution is a possibility as she often disappears only to reappear later with large amounts of money for Allos. Whatever the source of the money, Bulosan elides the issue of sex in regards to Marian's death from syphilis. Allos's pity in these reminders of his sisters point to the distinct possibility that his sisters may have been forced into prostitution themselves due to the family's financial situation in the Philippines. When Allos first sees a prostitute he is told "there are many girls like her in Manila . . . they came from the provinces hoping to find work in the city. But look where they have landed."^{lxviii} From the limited perspective provided in *America is in the Heart*,

the reader can find it well within the realm of possibility that Allos's sisters may have gone to Manila or other cities seeking money and were forced into prostitution. This in turn enhances Bulosan's focus on Allos's victimization since it ties him closer to the victimization of many of the women and prostitutes found throughout the text.

While victimization is integral to the representation of women in the text, it is also important to note the instances where women are not depicted as merely victims, but also as actors suffused with their own agency. These women are intellectuals who influence Allos's own intellectual and political growth, but who have the fiscal stability to avoid the fate of prostitution that haunts so many of the other women in the text. Higashida argues that the systemic crises of the Depression decade "provided some women with opportunities to insert themselves into, and rearticulate the terms of struggles of global significance."^{lxix} The emphasis on these women in the text leads Higashida to conclude that "even as Bulosan evacuates women's issues from the fight for democracy . . . he testifies to the ways in which white female radical intellectuals refuted the very logic of brotherhood that he adopts, which would segregate women from the most salient political issues of the time."^{lxx} It is intriguing to note that it is a similar systemic failure, namely the Depression and World War II, which facilitates Bulosan's efforts at reimagining the place of Filipinos in American society. Bulosan's struggle against discrimination in *America is in the Heart* illuminates the utilization of these systemic failures to build something new. The question that faces Bulosan's work is whether he subverts one discrimination by implicitly replicating it on another community.

This implicit replication of discrimination is the case for many of the women Bulosan describes in the text. Yet Bulosan also portrays women in positive terms that, while not entirely liberating, nevertheless identify them with the improved America he is striving for. For Allos these women come to represent the idealized America he is trying to find. In regards to one of these women, Eileen Odell, Allos declares "she was undeniably the *America* I had wanted to find."^{lxxi} This America is not a country or an object, but rather it is "human, good, and real."^{lxxii} Allos's attachment to Eileen hints at Bulosan's own attraction to Dorothy Babb, the real life inspiration for Eileen. This attraction to a woman leads to Allos's most explicit description of America. Allos's description of Alice and Eileen's lives suggest that they had a life of poverty, but that Alice had grown up "rapidly and had sent herself through school" as well as helped Eileen do the same.^{lxxiii} Alice and Eileen both have backgrounds that mirror Allos's own attempts to escape poverty, gain education, and engage in radical politics. The result of this background is that Alice and Eileen are "*decent*" white women who stand out as the gendered – but not sexualized – representation of what America can be.^{lxxiv} What Bulosan projects this version of America to be though is a white woman supporting socialist ideas and sympathetic toward – if not attracted to – a Filipino intellectual. According to Higashida, "Bulosan undoubtedly idealizes these women such that they figure as surrogate mothers for Allos, but they are still unmistakably represented as political subjects who participate in the struggle over the meaning of the war between Labor and Capital."^{lxxv} Notably, Bulosan chooses Eileen as a figure for America rather than another mother figure: Miriam. The idealization of America then must hide both the personal attraction that Bulosan had for the women in his life and any hint of overt sexuality.

This idealization of America and of Allos's relationship with a woman cannot override the text's outright violence towards women at times and its problematic portrayal of women in general. As Higashida is careful to note, Allos's antisexual persona does not free Bulosan from culpability of sexism in his depiction of prostitutes in the text. She states, "This fear of sexuality buttresses Bulosan's refusal to perceive the material realities of prostitution and sexual abuse, which at best he perceives to be the bestialization of women and men; at worst, he implies that women invite violence upon themselves."^{lxxvi} The most

problematic scene Bulosan depicts between Allos and a woman occurs when Allos meets Helen, an agent of anti-union interests who serves as an antithetical figure to the idealized Eileen. Helen is a highly sexual figure who lives "as husband and wife" with multiple Filipino men, but she is also a woman that Allos has no attraction towards.^{lxxvii} While Bulosan makes Helen's status as an anti-union provocateur through her actions in undermining a number of union efforts at organizing, it is important to note Allos's reaction to her. Once Helen admits her hatred of Filipinos, Allos strikes "her in the face with a telephone receiver" with enough strength that it causes something to fall from her mouth.^{lxxviii} After being restrained, Allos focuses on the damage done to the Filipino labor movement by Helen's machinations rather than a reflection on his own actions. The damage that he does to Helen is, to Bulosan, not worth reporting as it is only "something" that falls from her mouth rather than a more specific description. Further, Helen becomes symbolic of whites, and white women seeking to hold back Filipino empowerment. If Eileen serves as a symbol of an idealized America, Helen represents the racist and exploitative side of America.

Contrasts such as those between Eileen and Helen serve to highlight Bulosan's discourse on sex in his personal history. It is not enough to argue that Bulosan merely presented a sexist portrayal of women in the text or that he was solely interested in the advancement of Filipino immigrants while everything else fell to the wayside. Instead Bulosan's discourse in *America is in the Heart* oscillates between the multiple purposes behind his self-portrayal. Sex and sexual relationships between Filipino men and white women were central to the question of Filipino empowerment and equality in the United States thanks to the prevalence of anti-miscegenation laws. But it was also personally important to Bulosan through his relationships with white women like Dorothy Babb. What we can conclude from Bulosan's representation of these issues is that he faced an impossible task in subverting stereotypes about Filipinos by subverting his own sexuality. The schisms between identity and the portrayal of sexuality in the text note the limitations of the idealized persona Bulosan was forced to create for himself in the name of political empowerment for Filipinos.

The last appearance of Helen and Allos's violence against her ultimately mark both Bulosan's troubling portrayal of women as well as the limitations of an overt sexual discourse that subverts sexuality in favor of the Filipino labor movement. As Jennifer P. Ting argues "sexuality is thoroughly political" and Bulosan's personal issues with sexuality and sexual identity must then be read as a discourse that is not secondary to that of nationalistic reform but one concomitant to it.^{lxxix} Any attempt to decipher Bulosan's self representation must take into account both Bulosan's nationalistic purpose as well as the demands of his personal sexuality and relations with the women in his life. Within these relationships exists the inextricable connection between sexuality and violence.

This connection is best seen in the repetition of a particular description that Bulosan uses at two different points in *America is in the Heart*. At the end of part I Allos is confronted with a prostitute and a client having sex. The experience is so shocking to Allos that he is unable to articulate his feelings and he ends up running away from the scene. After running away, Allos states, "I put my arms around a post and tried to ease the wild beating of my heart. I wanted to cry. Suddenly, I started beating the post with my fists."^{lxxx} Much later in life Allos has a similar reaction, but this time in response to an assault by police officers. After Allos and a group of prominent Filipinos are humiliated when two police detectives unwarrantedly interrupt their dinner Allos flies into a rage. He gets a gun and contemplates murder and is only stopped when his brother Marcario takes the gun away. Allos describes how "for a moment I looked at him with hatred, then I turned, went to my bed, and lay face down, holding my chest against the wild beating of my heart."^{lxxxi} In both of these scenes Allos's heart remains at the center of the description. It is a wild thing that Allos struggles to

control and in both cases Allos has turned to violence in some way. At the same time these scenes point towards the symbolic importance of Allos's heart. In order to describe an idealized America, Bulosan chooses to describe it as being in the heart. As such, he uses interpersonal relationships with women as a means of exploring the numerous facets of Filipino experience in America. If Allos's struggles with the wild beating of his heart suggest anything, it is the inexorable connection between sex and violence in the text. Whatever Bulosan's personal shortcomings in regards to sexism, he remains trapped by a racist rhetoric regarding sex. As such, each of Bulosan's efforts to express sexual relationships is always already marked by this violence and a sense of Allos's victimization in a set of depictions that Bulosan could not entirely control as his personal history necessarily reacted to public need. It is only by tracing these moments of subversion of the personal that the text can truly be seen as a personal history.

Notes:

1. Carlos Bulosan, *America is in the Heart: A Personal History*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 152.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. E. San Juan Jr., *On Becoming Filipino: Selected Writings of Carlos Bulosan*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 3.
6. Carey McWilliams, introduction to *America is in the Heart: A Personal History*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), xv
7. San Juan Jr., *On Becoming Filipino*, 3.
8. McWilliams, introduction to *America is in the Heart*, xv
9. San Juan Jr., *On Becoming Filipino*, 6
10. Susan Evangelista, *Carlos Bulosan and His Poetry: A Biography and Anthology*. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1985), 10
11. Ibid., 11-12
12. McWilliams, introduction to *America is in the Heart*, xvii
13. San Juan Jr., *On Becoming Filipino*, 37
14. Ibid.
15. McWilliams, introduction to *America is in the Heart*, vii.
16. Ibid.
17. Ngai, Mae M. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 110.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 117.
20. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2001), 6.
21. E. San Juan Jr., *Carlos Bulosan and the Imagination of the Class Struggle* (Quezon: University of the Philippines Press, 1972), 94.
22. Martin Joseph Ponce, "On Becoming Socially Articulate: Transnational Bulosan," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8, no.1 (2005): 51.
23. Ibid.
24. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (New York: Verso, 1991), 6.
25. Ibid., 7.
26. Bulosan, *America*, 319.
27. Steven V. Hunsaker, introduction to *Autobiography and National Identity in the Americas* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 5.
28. Ibid., 6.
29. Bulosan, *America*, 327.
30. Ibid., 327.
31. Ibid., 141.
32. Ibid., 135.
33. Ibid., 126.
34. Ibid., 188.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 188-189.
37. Meg Wesling, "Colonial Education and the Politics of Knowledge in Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*," *MELUS: The Journal of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 32 no.2 (2007): 58.
38. Ibid., 73.
39. Rachel C. Lee, *The Americas of Asian American Literature: Gendered Fictions of Nation and Transnation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 21.
40. Bulosan, *America*, 147.
41. Lee, *The Americas of Asian American Literature*, 25.
42. Ibid., 27.
43. Cheryl Higashida, "Re-Signed Subjects: Women, Work, and World in the Fiction of Carlos Bulosan and Hisaye Yamamoto" in *Transnational Asian American Literature: Sites and Transits*, ed. Shirley Geok-Lin Lim (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 44.
44. Ibid.
45. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 11.
46. Ibid.
47. McWilliams, introduction to *America is in the Heart*, viii.
48. Evangelista, *Carlos Bulosan and His Poetry: A Biography and Anthology*, 12.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., 13.
51. Bulosan, *America*, 141.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., 67.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., 142.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 159.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., 160.
61. Ibid., 159-160.
62. Ibid., 258.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., 260.
65. Ibid., 115.
66. Ibid., 212.
67. Ibid., 211.
68. Ibid., 92.
69. Higashida, "Re-Signed Subjects," 46.
70. Ibid., 47.
71. Bulosan, *America*, 235.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., 230.
74. Ibid., 229.
75. Higashida, "Re-Signed Subjects," 47.
76. Higashida, "Re-Signed Subjects," 44.
77. Bulosan, *America*, 200.
78. Ibid., 203.
79. Jinnifer P Ting, "The Power of Sexuality," *Journal of Asian American Studies*. 1 no.1 (1998): 66.
80. Bulosan, *America*, 93.
81. Ibid., 308.

Works Cited:

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1991.
- Bulosan, Carlos. *America is in the Heart: A Personal History*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000.
- Espiritu, Augusto Fauni. "Suffering and Passion: Carlos Bulosan." *Five Faces of Exile: The Nation and Filipino American Intellectuals*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- Evangelista, Susan. *Carlos Bulosan and His Poetry: A Biography and Anthology*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1985.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books, 1980.
- Higashida, Cheryl. "Re-Signed Subjects: Women, Work, and World in the Fiction of Carlos Bulosan and Hisaye Yamamoto." In *Transnational Asian American Literature: Sites and Transits*, edited by Shirley Geok-Lin Lim. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006: 29-54.
- Hunsaker, Steven V. Introduction to *Autobiography and National Identity in the Americas*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999.
- Lee, Rachel C. *The Americas of Asian American Literature: Gendered Fictions of Nation and Transnation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- McWilliams, Carey introduction to *America is in the Heart: A Personal History*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000.
- Ngai, Mae M. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Ponce, Martin Joseph. "On Becoming Socially Articulate: Transnational Bulosan," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8, no.1 (2005): 49-80.
- San Juan Jr. E. *Carlos Bulosan and the Imagination of the Class Struggle*. Quezon: University of the Philippines Press, 1972.
- . *On Becoming Filipino: Selected Writings of Carlos Bulosan*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995.
- Smith, Sidonie, and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2001),
- Ting, Jinnifer P. "The Power of Sexuality," *Journal of Asian American Studies*. 1 no.1 (1998): 65-82.
- Tolentino, Cynthia. "In a 'Training Center for the Skilled Servants of Mankind': Carlos

Bulosan's Professional Filipinos in the Age of Benevolent Supremacy." *American Literature* 80 no.2 (2008): 381-406.

Wesling, Meg. "Colonial Education and the Politics of Knowledge in Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*." *MELUS: The Journal of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 32 no.2 (2007): 55-7